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AUTHOR Hoffmann, Eliahu
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ABSTRACT

This paper describes a series of courses in technical librarianship in Israel. Upon successful completion of these courses and the relevant examinations, students receive certification as non-academic librarians from the Israel Library Association's special educational committee. Two levels of courses are briefly described: Level A--the basic level--is intended to teach the rudiments of librarianship for beginners and consists of one course, uniform in structure and suitable for further education in all kinds of libraries; Level B courses are divided into two parts, public and school libraries, and special libraries. Information on qualifications for enrollment, duration of the course, subjects of instruction, and methods of instruction is supplied for both Course A and Course B. The remainder of the paper details Course B, Special Libraries, and includes information on the character, students, and contents of Course B. Revisions and modifications for Course B (to be implemented in the autumn of 1984) are described, including the introduction of modern methods of information handling and streamlining of the subject content. (THC)

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EDUCATION IN TECHNICAL, NON-ACADEMIC, LIBRARIANSHIP IN ISRAEL

THE COURSE FOR SPECIAL LIBRARIES - LEVEL B

by Eliahu Hoffmann

Israel Society of special Libraries and Information Centers

and

The National Center of Scientific and Technological Information

P.O.B. 20125, Tel Aviv 61201, Israel

ED252236

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INTRODUCTION

Instruction in librarianship in Israel is being given in Hebrew. Academic librarianship is taught in Israel at the library school of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem; at the department of bibliographical studies and librarianship of the Bar-Ilan University, Ramat Gan, and at the Haifa University. Upon completion of these studies the students receive an academic degree in librarianship. Parallel to these studies there exist a series of courses in technical librarianship; technical in the sense that upon successful completion of these courses and the relevant examinations, the students receive a certificate as non-academic librarians. The certificate is issued on behalf of the Israel Library Association by its special educational committee. This committee holds and supervises the appropriate annual examinations. The certificate has received professional recognition by the Israel Federation of Labor, by the Civil Service Commission of the Government of Israel for the

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employment of its librarians and by practically every employer of library personnel in Israel. The syllabi for these courses have been prepared under the supervision of - and in cooperation with this educational committee.

The courses are held at two levels. Level A - the basic level - is intended to teach the rudiments of librarianship for beginners and consists therefore of one course, uniform in structure and suitable for all kinds of libraries. The students who pass successfully the final examinations of this course receive a certificate of "assistant librarian". Since at this stage their library education is not yet complete, most of them continue to take level B courses. These are separate for either public and school libraries or for special libraries. Graduates of these courses who pass their final examinations receive a certificate of "librarian" in their areas of proficiency, i.e. public and school libraries or special libraries. It is this course of instruction for special libraries which is the main theme of this paper, though course A will also be dealt with briefly.

COURSE A

Qualifications for enrolment: Prospective students must have a High School diploma or its equivalent or 12 years of secondary schooling. Although lessons are given in Hebrew much of the reference literature is in English. Therefore a fair proficiency in English is also required.

Duration of the course: The course comprised until recently, 250 classroom hours, about 7 hours weekly, for a period of approximately 8 months. An additional 75 hours for homework is also required.

Subjects of instruction: Subjects of instruction with corresponding examinations were until recently as follows:

1. Classification - 70 hours; 2. Cataloging - 70 hours; 3. Bibliography and reference work - 50 hours; 4. Filing of catalog cards - 8 hours; 5. Library organization and administration - 52 hours.

Methods of instruction: Frontal classroom lectures and discussions, case studies, exercises, homework and visits to libraries.

The methods of instruction are individual and very intensive. Courses A are given almost every year in most of the major libraries of the central cities in Israel.

COURSE B, SPECIAL LIBRARIES

Qualifications for enrolment: Prospective students must have a certificate of assistant librarian or an equivalent degree and practical experience of at least 1 year of library work in an authorized library. An academic degree especially in the natural and technical sciences is an asset and proficiency in English is mandatory.

Duration of the course: The course comprised until recently, 360 classroom hours, 8 hours weekly, for a period of approximately 11 months. Additional time for homework and tests is also mandatory.

Subjects of instruction: Subjects of instruction with corresponding examinations were until recently as follows:

1. Classification - 120 hours; 2. Cataloging - 30 hours; 3. Indexing - 20 hours; 4. Bibliography - 90 hours; 5. Storage and retrieval of information - 60 hours; 6. Library organization and administration - 40 hours.

Methods of instruction: These are essentially the same as in course A with more emphasis on case studies and practical problems and examples and visits to modern information centers. Here too the instructions are individual and very intensive and classes are held small (no more than 15 students).

CHARACTER, STUDENTS AND CONTENTS OF COURSE B, SPECIAL LIBRARIES

Whereas courses A are given in the major libraries of the central cities in Israel, course B, special libraries, has so far only been given in Tel Aviv by the National Center of Scientific and Technological Information. With summer vacation in between, the course actually runs for a year and a quarter and has been repeated in bi-annual cycles.

The term "special libraries" covers, of course, every type of specific subject library but the emphasis in this course has been mainly, though not exclusively, on scientific and technical libraries. For this reason holders of degrees in technical and scientific subjects are at a definite advantage. The course, as described above, has initially been formalized in 1973 and is, of course, heavily oriented towards library and documentation work. Nevertheless a determined effort has been made during the last couple of years to introduce some of the modern aspects and methods of information storage and retrieval. These efforts culminated last year (1983) in major revisions and modifications of the contents of both, courses A and B, special libraries. This was undertaken by the educational committee of the Israel Library Association and will be described later on. In any case, the graduates of this course are well suited for work in a scientific and technical information center and able to organize one, where it is needed and does not yet exist. They are therefore much in demand

by industrial and scientific enterprises which have to cope with an ever increasing amount of information.

Applicants to this course come from very diverse backgrounds. Many of them are graduates of course A who wish to complete their education in librarianship with emphasis on special libraries. Some of them have been working in special libraries and information centers for quite some time and have gained much practical experience. In addition there are applicants with academic degrees in librarianship who want to extend their expertize to special libraries and information centers. Finally there are applicants with academic degrees in scientific and technical subject areas who have left their profession and moved to information work in libraries and information centers in their areas of expertize. If they have a course A certificate they are wellcome to enroll in course B and to take the appropriate final examinations. Some of them, however, have no formal basic education in librarianship and are therefore precluded from sitting for these examinations. They can theoretically join the course and forgo the examinations, provided they have enough basic knowledge of librarianship to follow the lessons. However there is no dearth of regular applicants and therefore members of this latter category are usually discouraged from joining the course.

In the following a more detailed description of the various subjects of course B are given.

1. Classification deals mainly with the practical applications of the UDC, according to the latest abbreviated edition in the English version.
2. Cataloging is an extension of the material taught in course A with emphasis on conferences, serials, and non-book material, according to AACR - 2, 2nd ed., 1978.

3. Indexing deals in general with principles and systems of indexing, its various modes of application in conventional, mechanized and computerized form; the evaluation of systems according to specific needs; a general review of national and international indexing and abstracting services.

4. Bibliography deals with general and specific reference works in the national and life sciences, the exact sciences and technology. Nearly 50 specific reference works are covered and used in exercises by all students. In the final examinations optional questions are given according to the chosen specialization of the students in either the natural and life sciences or in the exact sciences and technology.

5. Storage and retrieval of information deals with the task of the information officer; the various aspects of information storage - principles, techniques,equipment; the problems of information retrieval - retrospective searches; current awareness; retrieval of non-book material; reprography.

6. Library organization and administration deals mainly with the special library, its functions and services - general and specific,and with national and international special library organizations.

REVISIONS AND MODIFICATIONS

As mentioned previously, revisions and modifications were planned for course B in 1983 and are to be implimented in the Autumn of 1984. On the one hand it was felt necessary to introduce more of the modern methods of information handling, specifically instructions on the various types of computers, main-

frame, mini, micro, their modes of operation; basic aspects of software and the utilization of these means in library work and information retrieval. In addition, a broader spectrum of the modern information services and utilities had to be presented. Thus the functions, the organization and the administration of a modern library and information center have to be taught in the context of these developments.

On the other hand it became imperative to shorten the course and these contradictory demands could only be met by presumabely streamlining the subject content of the course. As a result, a course curriculum with a total of 270 frontal hours was developed in which 3 main topics - with 90 hours each - will be taught. These 3 main topics are: 1. Organization and retrieval of information. 2. Bibliography of reference literature and information sources. 3. Organization, administration and functions of library services. Some of these changes will be described in more detail. They had to be coordinated obviously with changes in course A. Thus the subject of cataloging was completely transferred to the basic course. Also transferred to this course was the basic instruction in UDC together with some of the other classification systems which are taught in it. The renamed subject of organization and retrieval of information in effect replaces the previous subjects of classification, indexing and in part, information retrieval. Classification systems such as UDC, LC and also DC and COLON are taught and practised here in greater depth together with other tools of identification and retrieval, such as the various methods of indexing. In addition the theory and techniques of information retrieval are being dealt with with special emphasis on mechanized, computerized information retrieval.

The subject of bibliography is restructured so that the various tools are not enumerated each and every one separately, but each type is described in detail with one or two examples for practice and exercise. Finally, the subject of organization, administration and functions of library services includes a large section which deals with the computer as a tool in the library and information center. The various types of services, the users they are to serve, the products they are to supply and their usefulness; all these are dealt with in detail. The various aspects of the operation of a library or information center like budget, manpower, organizational aspects are also treated with regard to the services which they are supposed to render. The whole subject has been broadened considerably since it has been eliminated in the basic course.